

Story, 22.5.2008.  
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I have just mailed my second semester and I am still feeling unsettled! I just can't seem to concentrate on anything and people are just not fixing me. On my phone is a group of people who keep asking me to come to their parties, where they do "fun" & "cool" things. People say they do drug parties! Sometimes I get tempted. I really do wish I had company. But even, I know that this is not the company I want. I have decided ~~again~~ to keep trying to make friends and get busy with other things, rather than ~~try~~ and ~~not~~ get involved in the wrong kinds of things.

## Talk to your child about drugs.

It is important to speak to your child about drugs and alcohol.

Drugs are in Indian schools: It is not a question of IF your child will be in contact with drugs, but WHEN. And when they are, will they be ready?

### MYTH...

If my child took drugs, I would know it.

### THE TRUTH IS...

Many cheap drugs are on the market today. Young people do not need to steal or ask their parents for large amounts of money to buy them. The harmful effects of drugs gradually become visible after prolonged use. The short-term effects of most drugs are often hidden and confused with a sense of sleeplessness or irritability. Most of the time, parents are the last to know about their child's drug problem.

- ▶ Peer pressure: To be accepted, be popular, fit in, and to impress friends.
- ▶ Stress management: To relieve stress, keep calm, take away loneliness.
- ▶ To forget or solve problems: financial, sexual, and social.

Why do kids take drugs?

- ▶ Enjoyment, excitement and fun: To feel good, to be happy, and when bored, to get energy.
- ▶ Self-imaging: Taking drugs is not only a means of conveying an image to others, it is a way of conveying an image to yourself.
- ▶ Risk taking and rebellion: The potential negative consequences of taking drugs, coupled with the fact that they are illegal, can make drugs a more enticing prospect.
- ▶ Out of curiosity: to experiment.
- ▶ Body concept: to become thin, to build muscle.
- ▶ Availability: there are drugs in Indian schools and in society generally, and they are often affordable to students.
- ▶ Addiction: to avoid withdrawal symptoms once dependent.

### **SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR IF YOU SUSPECT THAT YOUR CHILD IS TAKING DRUGS**

Changes in mood or attitudes, unusual temper outbursts, altered sleeping habits and changes in hobbies or other interests are all common in teen years. Here are the specific things you need to look out for, especially if your instinct tells you or someone else tells you, that your child is doing drugs.

- ▶ Sudden change of friends.
- ▶ Negative changes in schoolwork, missing school, or declining grades.
- ▶ Increased secrecy about possessions or activities.
- ▶ Being unable to account for money.
- ▶ Use of incense, room deodorant, or perfume to mask smoke or chemical odours.
- ▶ Subtle changes in conversations with friends, e.g., using more secretive "coded" language.
- ▶ Change in clothing choices: new fascination with clothes that highlight drug use.
- ▶ Increase in borrowing money.
- ▶ Evidence of drug paraphernalia such as pipes, rolling papers, matches etc.
- ▶ Increased use of mouthwash or breath mints to cover up the smell of alcohol.
- ▶ Missing prescription drugs especially narcotics and mood stabilizers.



## What to do if you think your child is taking drugs?

### First:

- ▶ Try not to panic.

### Second:

- ▶ Don't confront your child if he or she still seems under the influence. Wait until the effects wear off.
- ▶ Stay calm and discuss the situation without fighting. Listen to what your child is saying without being judgmental. If what he is saying concerns you, express this honestly and without anger or tears.
- ▶ Explain why you are worried and what your concerns are and tell them how you feel. Negotiate guidelines and let your child be part of the process. By being part of the process of establishing guidelines, they are more likely to stick to them.
- ▶ Be firm, consistent and caring, but show that using drugs is an unacceptable practice that you disapprove of.

## DOs and DON'Ts

- ▶ Do support your child, but don't enable them to carry on with unacceptable behaviour. This is vital, no matter what the circumstance.
- ▶ Don't do it alone - Understand that if your child is addicted, he or she may need more help than you are able to give. Parents often make this mistake. Addiction is a disorder. You should not try to treat a medical disorder yourself.
- ▶ Remember to look after yourself and other family members - they will need support too.
- ▶ Do distinguish between the child and the drugs - you love them and not the drug or the behaviour it causes.
- ▶ Do let your child take responsibility for his or her own actions.
- ▶ Don't blame yourself and don't tell lies for your child to school, family and friends.
- ▶ Don't fund - either directly or indirectly - their drug habit by giving them money, paying their bills, etc.
- ▶ Don't expect the situation to go away if you ignore it.
- ▶ Don't believe everything you are told.
- ▶ And do contact a professional to help you - see the helplines in this pamphlet.

